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ESCAPE OF MR. BRACY'S FAMILY BY MEANS OF A RAFT.

FRANK LAYTON: AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN AUSTRALIAN FLOOD: AWKWARD NAVIGATION.

FROM a sound and refreshing sleep in the shepherd's hut, Frank Layton was half awakened by
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an uncomfortable sensation which seemed a renewal of his watery adventures of the previous afternoon. The hut was shrouded in gloom; the fire had burned low, and was hissing and spluttering strangely; the blanket on which the young

bushman had slept seemed saturated with moisture; and on reaching out his hand with the involuntary action of a half-aroused slumberer, it felt with a splash on the ground, which two or three hours before had been dry as a threshing-floor. In another instant Frank was wide awake and on his feet; at the next, he had opened the door of the hut, when a sight presented itself which filled him with astonishment and alarm. Almost the entire valley was, or seemed to be, submerged.

Frank rubbed his eyes, fancying that he must still be dreaming, or that the uncertain light of the waning moon in the yet clouded sky was deceiving him. But there was no deception: the whole plain had become a turbulent lake; the hut was already swamped, and the waters were still rapidly rising. He could dimly see the muddy waves rolling onwards, and hear their dull heavy surge as they broke on the higher ground. Above this rose a sullen roar, like the sound of a distant cataract—it was the noise of a cataract; while, at intervals, loud explosions, more fearful, if possible, than the crash of thunder, broke upon the startled ear of the listener.

Frank did not stay for further intimations of impending danger: darting back into the hut, he shook the sleepers in the berths, and shouted in their ears. The men were provokingly fast asleep; and when partially aroused, their faculties seemed dormant.

"Look alive, Ben!" said Layton, "if you don't want to be washed away. The flood is down upon us."

"Ay, ay!" replied the fellow, lazily, slowly raising himself, and stepping unwillingly out of his berth. The first squash of his unbooted foot on the floor, however, effectually awakened him. Uttering an exclamation of terror, he rushed from the hut with Frank, followed by the hut-keeper.

In the short interval which had elapsed since Frank had been made aware of the imminent peril, the flood had palpably risen; the hut was now some inches deep in water; and before them nothing was visible by the dull light but an angry foaming torrent, hemming in the farm and homestead.

We have explained that these had been built, with a view to safety in an emergency like the present one, on rising ground, at some distance from the bed of the creek; and hitherto the precaution had been sufficient. But it now seemed plain to Frank that provision had not been made for these extraordinary occasions on which an Australian watercourse has been known to rise, in the course of a few hours, twelve or twenty feet, or higher, above its ordinary level—sweeping away all obstructions with overwhelming force—spreading devastation all around, and, if occurring in the night, adding danger to life to irresistible destruction of property.

The hurried glance which Frank cast into the dark overhanging gloom, showed the neighbouring huts, together with the shepherds', nearly surrounded with water; while the huge barnlike wool-shed, built on lower ground, seemed to be fairly afloat, and bore no distant resemblance to the popular representation of Noah's ark, trans-

ported from a toy-shop, and swollen to its original dimensions.

The patch of ground on which the farm-house stood was as yet apparently above the water, but cut off from the still higher part of the valley; and Frank shuddered as he thought of the perils to which the inhabitants would be exposed if the flood should continue to rise. It seemed strange to him that no sign of alarm was indicated, either in the farm or the huts. Not a light was to be seen from any window, nor was a sound heard besides the increasing surge of the rising billows, the distant rush of the water, descending in vast volumes from the mountainous reservoirs, down its precipitous channel, and the occasional crashes which announced the overthrow of some enormous fragment of rock, loosened from its bed, and rolled downward and onward by the impetuous torrent.

But though all on the station—themselves excepted—seemed lulled in fatal repose, dreaming perhaps that the alarming sounds of which we have spoken were but a continuance of the storm of wind and thunder of the previous day, the live stock of the farm evinced greater watchfulness, and seemed conscious of the fate to which they were exposed. While hesitating as to the course he should take, Frank became aware of an extraordinary commotion in the adjoining sheep-fold, indicated by a trampling, splashing sound, mingled with plaintive bleats, as though the whole flock were wildly rushing from side to side of the inclosure, in vain endeavours to escape from confinement; while a troop of horses and colts, having broken from the paddock, galloped by the huts in smarting amazement, towards the higher and yet open ground.

"What's to be done?" exclaimed Frank, after a short minute, which had sufficed to show him the need of immediate action.

"Done! why, the best thing to be done is to feller thim pownies, the darlings," said the hut-keeper.

"That's what I say," said the shepherd, wading back into the hut, and groaning, unsuccessfully as it seemed, for his boots; "there's sense in horses; and—"

"But Mr. Bracy and his family," interposed Frank, hastily; "and the men in the other huts—"

"Must jist look out for their-selves," said the man sullenly. "Everybody for his-self," he added, as he sprang from the hut, and disappeared in the gloom.

The hut-keeper, a strong, brawny, loose-jointed countryman of O'Connell, was about following the shepherd's example, when Layton arrested him with a strong gripe of the arm:—"You are not the man, Shane, to leave the women in danger like this, and not even warn them of it?"

The man ran his fingers through his shock head of hair, in perplexity:—"Warn them, is it, Mr. Layton? There's warning enough to wake the seven sleepers; and it's warning they've taken by this time," he said: "there's lights glaming from the windys at last."

And even as the man, whom Layton addressed as Shane, spoke, lights were seen hurriedly gleaming from window to window in the farm, and the double explosion of a gun gave evidence that the

farmer was at length not only alive to the serious predicament in which all around him were suddenly and unexpectedly placed, but was striving to give the alarm to his men in the huts. The report of the gun was succeeded by the loud barking of the numerous dogs on the farm; and the next minute, shouts from, and manifest commotion in, the other huts, proclaimed to Frank that sleep, for that night, was exchanged for sudden activity.

"All right so far, then," said Frank, cheerily; "but we may as well let them know we are awake too." And he raised a shrill "coo-eh;" and then, without listening for a reply, he sprang forward.

Not much time had been lost; for though the scene has taken some time to describe, probably little more than five minutes had elapsed since Frank had first been made aware of the coming down of the flood. A delay of five minutes, however, in some circumstances, may be attended with serious consequences; and by this time the waters had so rapidly risen that the hut was no longer tenable, while the farm-house, as it seemed to Frank, was losing the advantage of its slightly more elevated position.

To the surprise of the hut-keeper, whose movements kept pace with those of the young stockman, instead of pushing at once for the yet unflooded part of the valley, and then following in the steps of the shepherd, Frank proceeded at once to the sheep-fold, bearing up with some exertion against the stream, which, rising by this time above his knees, had nearly upset him by its force; and in reply to a hurried exclamation of the Irishman, he explained that the whole flock would be drowned if not released.

"It's thrue for ye, that," said the man, with a touch of compassion; and making towards the higher part of the fold, the two men tore up a hurdle, and at the next instant the flock was leaping frantically through the narrow opening, with no distinct idea, apparently, of gratitude; for, at the first rush, Shane was overthrown, and floundered desperately in the water till assisted to rise by his companion.

"The haythenish bastes; only to think of that now! and me—asy, asy; but its little since *they* have, anyway," he exclaimed, as, instead of directing their course to the safer ground, a number of them dashed into the deeper stream, and were seen, by the dim glimmer of the clouded sky, helplessly plunging into the full current of the flood. "Not much use of us takin' this throuble," he added. "So now, by your lave, mister stockman, here goes Larry Shane."

"It can't be helped," said Frank, rather mortified to witness the ill success of his attempt to save the sheep; "better they should have this chance, however, than none; but take it easy, Larry—we must get to the farm somehow."

"Is it a porpuss you think me to be?" asked Larry.

"Look here," continued Frank, not heeding this question—"the stream sets right there away; and a few of these hurdles, if we would fasten them together, might make a raft;" and he began to loosen the stakes to which they were fastened.

"And what thin?" asked Larry, doubtfully.

"Why, then, if we could get to the farm we might be of some use: think of the females, Larry."

"That's thrue," said the other, with sudden alacrity: "the faymales,"—up came a stake—"hould hard, master Frank; the wather's up to my lower rib, and it's mighty could. Is it a bit of sthring? well, that's good, anyhow," pulling a coil of yarn from his pocket. "Asy now"—fastening together two hurdles, laid across and across—"the faymales: to be sure, the faymales must be thought on; and it's washed away like pea-haulm the big house will be before morning light. I saw the latter end of a flood once before, and an awful sight it was:—another hurdle, mister Layton; hey, but the sthrame pulls powerful strong, and roaring it is like twinty thousand mad bulls. The faymales, young and ould, they're not to be niglicted, anyhow; and it's little they can do to help themselves in a ruccion like this, I'm thinking. Is it a rudder?—well, that's quare now."

By this time the raft was completed; and, holding on to its opposite sides, the two men waded cautiously into the deeper water, and then clambered to its top, imperfectly guiding it with a broken rail which served as a paddle.

The farm was only two or three hundred yards distant; but the navigation proved anything but easy and safe. At one time, the raft was whirled round in an eddy; then it plunged forward unmanageably, out of its intended course, and swiftly darted towards the middle of the turbulent rapids.

Frank looked silently and anxiously around, while his companion wielded the make-shift paddle with a coolness and skill which gave promise of eventual success. At the same time, the uproar was sensibly increasing; a vast body of water was evidently still pouring down the rocky heights which hemmed in the upper end of the valley; and every moment added to the force of the waves, which threatened to carry away everything before them. The huts which Frank and Larry were leaving behind were now deep in the flood; and the rest of their recent occupants were probably fleeing for safety to the bush-covered hills in the distance.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A RUSH STORY BY A PARLOUR FIRE.

OUR readers will understand that the incidents we have endeavoured to narrate in the foregoing chapter took place some two or three hours after midnight; and they will remember that at an earlier hour we left Challoner Matson in comfortable enough circumstances as Mr. Bracy's guest.

To Mr. Bracy, the afternoon adventure of the young American was a source of good-natured amusement. "You call this a flood," he said: "you should have been with me twelve years ago, or thereabout, to see an Australian flood in all its magnificence—"

"And danger," added Mrs. Bracy, with a slight shudder. "I don't think Mr. Matson need wish that."

"Not particularly, madam," replied the young man; "though I can conceive there must be something very grand in witnessing the gradual—"

"Gradual! my dear sir; you are thinking of your Mississippi. I suppose, with its gradual risings and fallings. There is very little that is gradual

in an Australian flood, when one comes in right earnest."

"I stand corrected, sir; I should have said sudden and overwhelming."

"I will tell you, and you shall judge," said Mr. Bracy. "It was a terribly hot and dry year—you may have heard that, in some particular seasons, the drought has been so excessive over part of the country, that cattle and sheep have perished by thousands and tens of thousands; and the only resource for the farmers has been the melting-vat, and that only of late years? Well, sir, it was one such summer as that. There had been no rain for three or four months; every green blade of grass was burnt up, and all the water-holes were caked into dry, hard mud. Only here and there a puddle of filthy water was to be found; and to reach these the flocks had to be driven many a weary mile, dropping down by the score, sir, as they went and returned. We lost pretty nearly all our property that year, Mr. Matson; and you need not wonder that we have now settled down in a part of the country where, if there is occasional inconvenience from too much water, we are in no great danger of having too little."

"But about the flood. I was one day at my wit's end, and started off with a shepherd on an exploring expedition. I thought that if we could find water anywhere within reach of the station, we might manage to save a few of our sheep. It was a fearfully hot day, as we entered the bush; and on and on we rode, camping out, and riding on again, day after day, finding just water enough to keep our horses alive and our throats moist, and that was all. We passed station after station, sir; and all the story was—no water, flocks perishing, and farmers in desperation."

"At last we came to a small valley, at no great distance from the mountain range. It might be a fruitful place in general; at any rate, its rough sides were covered with fine forest trees, and a watercourse ran through it; but at that time, besides the trees, there was no trace of vegetation, and every hole in the bed of the stream was dried up. It looked like a valley of desolation."

"The sun, sir, was shining fiercely overhead; and not a speck of a cloud was visible. We were nearly exhausted; and our horses were in a worse plight, so that we had to dismount and lead them along the watercourse, wishing, rather than hoping, to find a deeper hole, not quite dry."

"All at once, sir, a murmuring sound, like wind in the distance, fell on our ears, though there was not a breath of air to fan our cheeks: it came on louder and louder, till the roar was absolutely deafening. My shepherd, more alive to it than I, was already on his horse's back, and urged me also to mount and run. I looked up then, and, a mile off it might be, I saw what I shall never forget—a wall of water, sir; how high I fancied it to be, I scarcely like to say now; but there it was, rolling onward with incredible swiftness, filling up the whole valley, and sweeping everything before it in its progress. Tall trees, sir, I saw torn up, or broken off like so many rotten sticks; and the very earth seemed to be ploughed up by the fury of the flood."

"I did not need a second warning. The next minute we were scudding across the valley for

dear life. Our horses were sensible of the danger; there was no need for whip or spur; and faster I never rode than then."

"But it gained on us, sir; by the time we had reached the side of the valley, the wall of water was not a hundred yards off; and we had barely time to reach a secure halting-place when it rushed past us, and all around was a dark, foaming sea, bearing along, in its swift course, the wrecks of mighty trees, twisted, broken, and shattered; while above us was a bright blue sky. You may think it was grand, sir; but ours was not a very pleasant position. For one thing, we were not the only fugitives. Did you ever see a diamond snake, Mr. Matson?"

"No, sir; but I have understood that it is among the most venomous of your reptiles, though, happily, rarely to be met with in the settlements."

"You may say that, sir; oh, your snakes are a modest and retiring generation—so much the better for us. Well, sir, we were just congratulating ourselves on our escape, when—hiss-ss-ss: if I did not jump quickly away, my man did; and so did the horses, Mr. Matson; and there, curling round a tree, and darting out its spiteful-looking tongue, and fixing on us its brilliant eyes, and ready for a spring, was one of the most beautiful creatures of its kind that ever I saw. It was full ten feet long if it was an inch, and not full grown either. A cut of my whip brought it down, sir; but it was probably as narrow an escape from death for one of us as the gallop from the flood. It was a beautiful creature, though, glittering in purple and gold in the bright sunshine. Fanny has got the skin, Mr. Matson, and will show it you to-morrow."

"You killed it, then?"

"Killed? I fancy so, Mr. Matson. It did not want another cut of the whip to finish it."

"My father was not only savage enough to kill, but to eat it, sir," interposed Frances Bracy, with a merry smile.

"And glad enough of the chance, as you would have been, Fanny, when there was nothing better to be got. And let me tell you, Mr. Matson, that a slice of snake, well broiled, is no such despicable bush relish, though there may be something unpleasant in the notion."

"*De gustibus non est disputandum*," said the guest, with a smile; "and I quite agree with you that there may be worse flesh than snake's flesh; I have tried it before now in the backwoods of my own country. But I interrupt your story, sir."

"Not a bit. I was saying that ours was not a very pleasant position; for, to say no more of the snake, we could not set a step, sir, but squash went something in the shape of scorpion or centipede, which came floating on to our bit of an island, as our refuge soon became. We had on thick boots and leggings, that was a comfort; we had the means of making a fire, too, that was another; and no fear of wanting water now. But there we were, sir, hemmed in for three days, before the flood began to abate, and give us a chance of retreating; and keeping close company with the gentry I have mentioned, to say nothing of kangaroo rats by the score, and a sprinkling of

opossums, that made for our island, and would not be frightened away.

"Well, sir, the water subsided at last, and we made our way homewards. By this time, the weather had changed; rain came pouring down upon us, and the whole country through which we had passed a few days before, when everything was burnt up, was now fresh and green, with rivers and creeks full to overflowing."

"And, excuse me, sir," said Challoner, when Mr. Bracy had finished his narration; "you do not think there is danger of a similar occurrence here?"

"No, not a real, right-down earnest flood, Mr. Matson," replied the farmer. "I can't say, however, but that I fancied we might be exposed to it, when we first settled down on this creek, and was rather cautious about beginning to build. But it is mostly in the neighbourhood of the higher mountains that these floods take place. With us the rising is more gradual and regular; and we know pretty nearly to a foot how high the water is likely to reach. But perhaps the best answer to give is that we have lived here a good many years now, and have never known anything more perilous than your adventure of this afternoon; and this reminds me that, instead of sitting here, listening to bush stories, you would probably prefer being snug between the sheets, sir."

The young man confessed to some approaches of bodily weariness, and soon afterwards retired to the guest-chamber, with fresh assurances from his host that he need not fear being washed away in the night, and with a recommendation to sleep soundly, in preparation for his morrow's journey.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

DANGER AND ESCAPE.

It is well with us when, with entire submission to the divine will, and with childlike confidence in our almighty Father's protection, we can draw near to him who sees and hears in secret, by the medium of approach which he himself has appointed, and commit ourselves to his guidance and love. It is well when the recollection of past deliverance leads us not only to gratitude and self-renunciation, and dedication to him whose we are and whom we serve, but to simple, unanxious dependence on HIS watchfulness who "neither slumbers nor sleeps." It is especially well when, in addition to this, and in reference to the ten thousand dangers which surround us daily, we can say, unhesitatingly:—

"Hast THOU not given thy word

To save my *soul* from death?

And I can trust my Lord

To keep my mortal breath.

I'll go and come, nor fear to die,

Till from on high Thou call'st me home."

It was thus with Challoner Matson; and we trust it will be no derogation from his character—for we wish our readers to think well of him—when we acknowledge that he slept more quietly and happily that night because he believed that around him, for his comfort and security, were "the everlasting arms."

How long he had slept he had no means of ascertaining, for his room was darkened by curtains, in addition to the obscurity of the night; but it

seemed to him but a short interval of repose from which he was roused by a distant rushing, booming sound, like that described by his host in the over-night story—awakening him to the kind of dreamy attention which often precedes the more complete concentration of the dormant faculties.

"What a strange thing imagination is," was one of his first ideas, as he half raised his head from the pillow. "I could be almost certain that the flood I heard described last night is now actually rushing down upon us. It is the wind, I suppose," and he was composing himself again to slumber, when a louder recurrence of the rushing sound, accompanied by a distinct, though distant crashing explosion, like, yet different from, that of thunder, caused him to spring to the floor, and draw aside the curtains of his window.

There was barely light enough to show that the inundation of the previous day was now spreading wide and fast. A raging lake appeared to be dashing below his window, where, but a few hours before, was a green and pleasant lawn. As he looked in astonishment at the scene, a trampling of horses from the adjoining paddock, galloping past the house, announced their alarm and flight; and the next moment he heard the loud shouts of Mr. Bracy; the wild tones of the young native, Dick Brown, who was the only man-servant in the house itself; and a suppressed cry of horror from more than one female voice; then, a hurried trampling, and Mr. Bracy, half-dressed, unceremoniously entered his chamber, with a light.

"Ah, Mr. Matson, you have been roused," he said, in a cheerful tone, which rather surprised the young man, who saw in the present emergency not only personal danger to all, but certain loss of a large amount of property to his host:—"I was wrong about danger, you see," the farmer added; "the flood is come at last, and we must get out of its way."

"I'll soon be ready to give what help I can, Mr. Bracy," said Challoner, as his host retired; and almost immediately afterwards, he heard the double report of a gun from the adjoining chamber.

"I am sorry to have startled you," said Mr. Bracy, with a good-humoured smile, as Challoner sprang from his room with some undefined dread, perhaps, of a tragic scene. "The fellows in the huts seem to be sleeping when they should be awake; and I sent them a message, that's all. They are moving now, however," he added, as Frank's "coo-eh" faintly reached his ear: "that's the young stockman's voice."

Few words more were spoken, for time was too precious; and very soon the whole establishment were assembled in the parlour in which, but three hours before, Mr. Bracy had laid plans for the morrow in fancied security. There was but little apparent excitement, except that a servant girl was loudly bewailing the day when she left her home in England, to be "drowned at last," and was clinging to Dick Brown for support until, beckoned away by his master, he suffered her to sink to the floor in hysterics, from which, as she was unheeded, she quickly recovered.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bracy, accompanied by his guest and the young black, disappeared, and, opening the hall door, stepped out on the raised platform of the verandah to reconnoitre. He looked

round in evident perplexity. The farm was surrounded, and the strong current forbade the hope of escape to the higher ground, while the waters were still deepening.

"This is awkward," he said. "If we had but horses, we might manage; but they have made themselves scarce. The only resource is to make a raft; and we have scarcely time, to say nothing of a want of materials."

"Wouldn't it be the safer plan," suggested Challoner, "to remain where we are till the flood subsides?"

The farmer shook his head negatively. "You don't know our Australian floods as I do, Mr. Matson. In half an hour, sir, or an hour at most, if the house stands so long, the lower rooms will be filled to the ceiling, and before morning not a vestige of farm, barn, or hut will remain."

"In that case, sir, there seems but little hope—"

"Oh, I don't say that, Mr. Matson—What now, Dick?" he added abruptly, turning to the native, who, uttering a sharp cry, plunged into the water, and disappeared round an angle of the building. A minute or two of anxious suspense intervened, in which Challoner fancied he heard the sound of near voices mingling with the sough and dash of the inundation.

Another minute, and the voices evidently approached nearer—then the raft of hurdles was seen drifting by, the men, waist deep in water, assisted by Dick Brown, labouring to float it up to the farm. A moment later still, Mr. Bracy and his guest were lending their assistance; and, after a severe struggle with the current, and with a loud shout of triumph from the Irishman, the raft was drawn in, and moored to the verandah with a slack rope; and they re-entered the hall, which by this time was deeply flooded.

Little time sufficed for explanation or consultation. While Challoner re-entered the parlour to assure the females that means of rescue were at hand, Mr. Bracy and his men laboured hard to render the raft available for the whole party by strengthening it with cordage, and lashing to it a flooring of doors torn from their hinges, and shutters from their frames. The men worked cheerily, for their employer set them the example; and before twenty minutes had elapsed the house was deserted, and the laden raft tossing on the waves, and whirling onwards, apparently at their mercy, into the broad, deep, and turbulent stream.

It floated bravely, however; and though more than once exposed to considerable danger in running foul of the wrecks of the forest which were dashing wildly down the current, the coolness and skill of the navigators succeeded at length in steering and paddling the strange craft into stiller water, and thence, after incredible exertion—during which no superfluous words could be spared—towards the higher ground which the flood had not yet covered, leaving far behind the desolated home.

Morning dawned at last, and brought with it a dreary prospect to the fugitives, who were clustered on the wooded slope of the valley on the opposite side of the creek to that on which the overwhelmed farm had stood. The sun rose brightly shining, but only to show more clearly the com-

pleteness of the ruin. Looking across the broad expanse of troubled water, and upwards towards the head of the valley, no traces of buildings were visible; and that the inundation had fulfilled Mr. Bracy's and Larry Shane's prediction was manifest from the broken fragments of house and furniture which occasionally floated swiftly onwards. A still more distressing sight, probably, was scores of drowned sheep, still tossing on the waves, or cast on to the margin of the flood. Of the men who had been roused from the huts and had fled for their lives, not one was seen. They no doubt had escaped; and the rest of the live stock of the farm might also have reached the hills in safety; but whether they would eventually be recovered, yet remained to be proved.

The loss was heavy; but notwithstanding this, Mr. Bracy, with his habitual self-command, rallied his daughters on their pale, distressful looks, and cheered his wife with hopeful, encouraging words: while the young men were also in earnest conversation, which seemed to have a wonderfully inspiring effect upon Frank. The young native was absent; he had disappeared shortly after the party had reached the shore; and Larry had found occupation in consoling the tender heart of the hysterical young lady, who, now that she had found a listener, was bewailing in floods of tears—"Quite nadeless, thim tares," he said, "whin thur war so much wather to the fore"—her loss of bonnets, shoes, and gowns, which she enumerated, and, what was worse still, her wages which she had kept in a little tin box, which she might have put into her pocket before starting, and didn't.

"Niver mind, now," he said, "the masther will make it up; there's lots of his gould in paper-money, they say, in the bank at Milbourne." And thereupon the damsel was comforted, till a new terror seized her mind. Where, in the wide world, would they get a breakfast? Not an ounce of tea, nor a crust of bread, she dared to say, was there to be got for miles and miles in this savage country.

"Is it tay?" said the persevering comforter; "there's wather, anyhow; and for ating—there's thim shaap—the poor bastes—that hadn't the sinse —"

An exclamation of intense horror from the young woman was cut short by welcome shouts from a neighbouring hill, and the appearance of Mr. Irving on horseback, attended by Dick Brown and some half-dozen of his men. A spring cart was also in attendance, to convey the "faymales" to Little Argyle. It had first to be unladen, however, of a small tent, a supply of blankets, and, what was equally acceptable, provision in good store. An hour later, and the ladies of the family, with their afflicted handmaiden, were journeying towards their neighbour's farm, under the protection of Challoner Matson, who proposed to pass on to Boomerang, and then to return and render such assistance as he could; while the two farmers and their men were watching the progress of the flood, and opportunities for repairing its extensive damages.

It slowly subsided; but that night, and many nights afterwards, masters and men bivouacked on the ground, with the sky above them for a roof.

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE.

[FIRST NOTICE.]

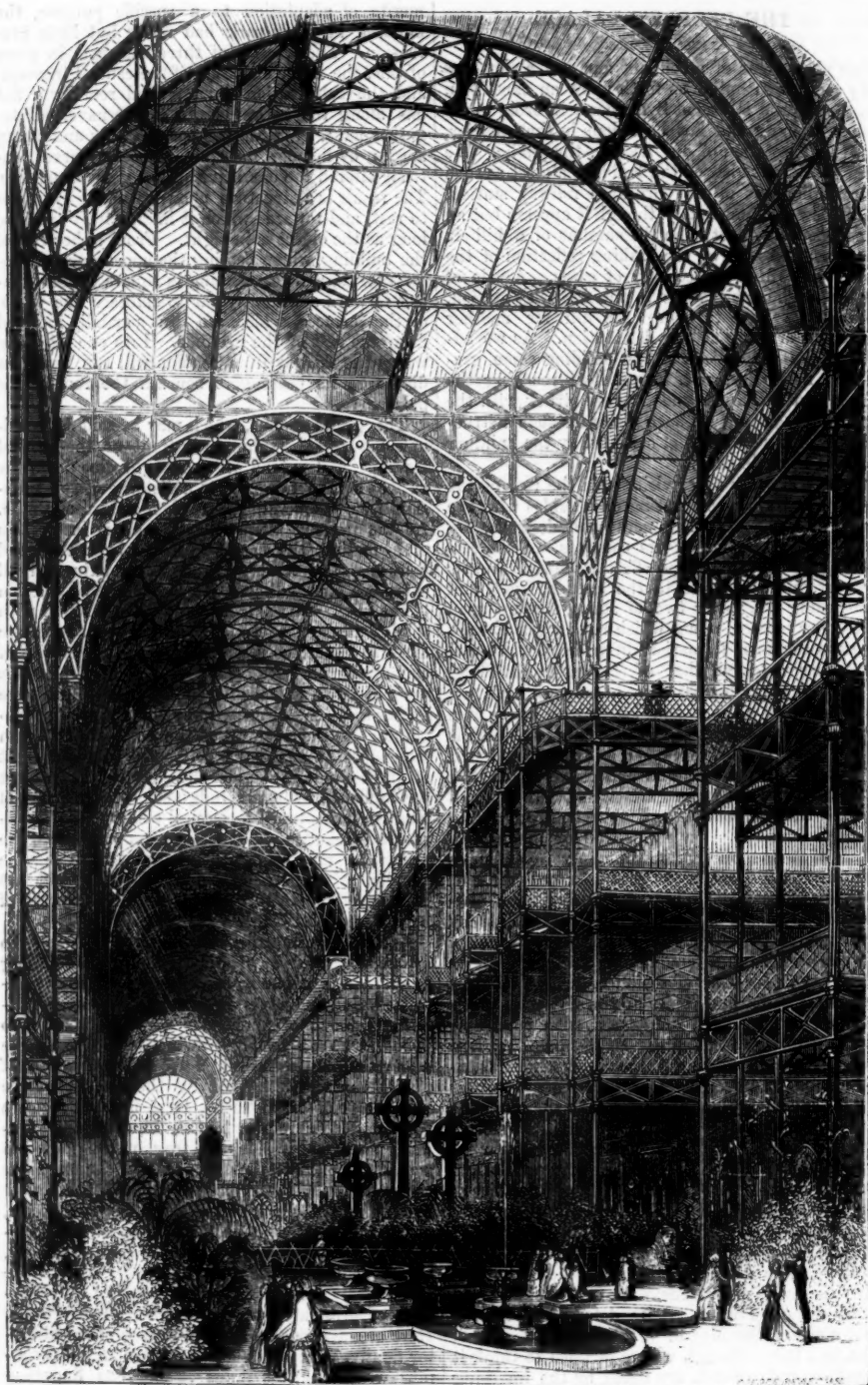
THE phenomena of a brilliant sun and a cloudless sky recently tempted us forth upon an expedition to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, in order to see what is doing and has been done in that quarter, for the delectation of our friends, the public. We catch a distant view of the building almost as soon as we glide out of the Brighton railway station, and know it immediately, though it appears but an undefined grey spot upon the summit of a hill six or seven miles off, by the flashing reflection of the sun's rays from its coating of glass. A ride of some half-hour brings us to the Annerley station, whence we have to climb the hill for another mile ere arriving at our destination. As we advance, the proportions of the building come gradually into view, and, long before reaching the level upon which it stands, we are struck with the immense superiority of such a site for such a structure, compared with that occupied by the building of 1851 in Hyde-park.

We enter, with other visitors, in the rear of the edifice, which is reverberating on all sides with the noise of a thousand hammers; and desirous, before an examination of its contents, of contemplating its appearance and effect as viewed from its own grounds, we cross to the garden front, and descending a flight or two of stairs, emerge upon the upper terrace, along which runs a gravel walk (now in course of formation) fifty feet in width and exceeding in length that of the entire building. From this upper terrace three broad flights of steps lead down to a lower and larger one, whose area will not be much less than thirteen acres, which is about equal to that occupied by the palace itself. It is to be laid out in walks and flower-beds after the manner of an Italian garden, and will be ornamented with six fountains of novel design, symmetrically arranged. On either side of the central flight of steps leading from the upper to the lower terrace, and in front of the grand central transept, two pairs of colossal sphinxes, reposing upon ponderous basements of granite, look out with stony eyes upon a glorious English landscape, stretched far away before them and fading out gradually in the misty atmosphere of distance. These sphinxes are close and faithful copies of the Egyptian original now at Paris, and are placed with admirable effect on their present site. Descending the slope yet further, and verging to the right among natural mounds and declivities, planted with flowering shrubs and evergreens, with here and there a noble tree whose spreading branches will yield a welcome shade in summer, we arrive at a point of view favourable for a glance at the entire structure of the palace. We feel at the first impression the justice of the universal praise which has been awarded to the improved design. The reduction of two hundred and forty feet in the length enables the spectator to embrace the whole building within the compass of his vision, without withdrawing to a distance too great for observation of its details. It is true that much of the idea of vastness is lost; but if that be a loss,—though we are inclined to think it is not,—ample amends are made by the imposing spectacle of just, elegant, and grand proportions—elements to which, notwithstanding its superlative

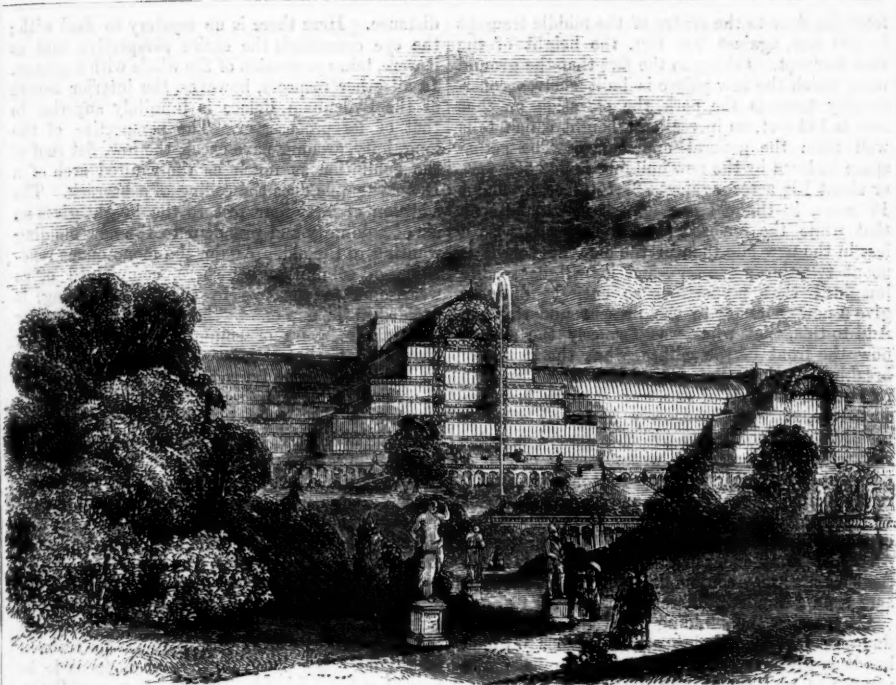
merits of adaptation to a specific purpose, the building in Hyde-park had really but little pretension. The erection of three transepts in place of one, the noble elevation of the central transept, and the substitution of an arched roof for a flat one along the entire length of the nave, all together have, by replacing parallel lines and sharp angles by flowing lines and graceful curves, entirely altered the character of the general outline. The result is a structure upon which the eye loves to rest, and towards which it instinctively turns so long as the object is in sight. From either end of the building, wings bearing the appearance of conservatories, and terminating in square towers, project forward sufficiently far to embrace the whole of the terraces, which are thus partially inclosed from the rest of the grounds. Into one of these wings the railway from London will run, and thus discharge its passengers beneath the roof of the palace.

The grand avenue, which may be said to terminate between the sphinxes in front of the central transept, will extend in a straight line down the entire slope of the park to a distance of two thousand feet,—something more than a third of a mile. At the present moment, while all is in process of formation, the earth upturned by a thousand workmen, and muddy excavations making on all sides, we find it difficult to realise the completion of the plan. Here, basins are walling round with solid masonry; there, a battalion of navvies are digging a spacious reservoir; yonder, mountains of clay are burning for ballast; temporary tramroads are laid down in miry trenches, and woodmen are felling trees and clearing away the underwood preparatory to the removal of the soil. But we can see enough to enable us to foretell that the result of all this industry, under the direction of the most accomplished taste and judgment, will be a sort of English Tusculum—a classical wilderness of horticultural beauties and artistic triumphs, where the pedestrian may wander at will, contemplating the wonders of modern or the glories of ancient art in connection with the more familiar charms of nature under an English sky.

We follow mechanically a party of visitors who are making their way towards a long, low building in the lower grounds, and, being courteously admitted, find ourselves in the presence of a portentous group of mud-made monsters terrific to behold, who are hourly growing more formidable under the plastic hands and trowels of a school of modellers engaged in building them up from the native clay of the district. Here is what seems a common toad amplified to the size of a hippopotamus, and by his side the frog of the fable has actually swollen to the dimensions of the ox. Here are creatures with the body of a duck, the fins or flappers of a phoca, the neck of a boa-constrictor, and the head of a crocodile. Here is the ichthyosaurus clothed on with his invulnerable armour, and furnished with his screw-propeller tail. Here is the lordly elk standing erect among a congregation of prostrate lizards of colossal longitude. Here are ravenous-looking leviathans of the alligator family, with jaws above a yard in length, bristling with countless fangs as large as fingers—together with monsters which we cannot pretend to name, and which Adam never named at all



INTERIOR OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE.



(belonging as they did to an antecedent period), of shapeless form and hideous aspect. Here, too, or rather in a tarpaulin-covered shed close by, is swelling into semblance the stupendous iguanodon, in whose body a score of gentlemen, invited by Mr. B. W. Hawkins, met to dinner. Professor Owen, it is reported, did the honours of the table, and seasoned the substantial fare with a colloquial lecture on the subject of antediluvian remains. He dwelt briefly on the discoveries of Cuvier and John Hunter, and of Buckland, who, from a single tooth, constructed the megalosaurus; and at the close of his remarks proposed as an appropriate toast the memory of Mantell, the discoverer of the iguanodon—a toast which was received in mournful silence. These strange monsters, suggestive as they are of the history of the earth ere its inhabitants were subjected to the mastery of mankind, will form one of the most striking and significant of the numberless attractions of the new palace, and will render valuable assistance to the student of geology. We were given to understand that they will not be removed into the building, but, on artificial islets, half concealed in flags and reedy coverts, will serve practically to illustrate the condition of the globe in some of its pre-Adamite periods. Some of them, indeed, are too monstrous to be moved at all; in their case, the mountain must come to Mahomet, or, in other words, the ponds must be dug and the herbage planted around them, as they cannot be transported to ponds or herbage at a distance.

Water, whether in motion or at rest, will form a principal feature as well in the palace itself as in the delightful gardens mapped out before it. The

ornamental fountains will spout water to a great height, and, in order to effect this, water will be pumped into tanks placed on the summit of the lofty towers, not yet completed, at either end of the building. The outer casing of the towers being formed of hollow cast-iron columns, the water descending through them will supply the jets of the fountains. These towers will also serve the purpose of chimneys to the furnaces used for heating the water required for warming the building in cold weather; and further, being fitted with a spiral stair rising to the height of nearly two hundred feet, will form a succession of available galleries for viewing the surrounding scenery. There will be broad basins of water between the flights of steps leading from the upper to the lower terrace, into which numerous dolphins, ranged in the vaulted niches of the terrace-wall, will spout a continuous stream. The grand water-works will be arranged at the bottom of the main avenue, but considerable time will elapse before the preparations necessary for the promised display will be complete.

Before entering the building for a brief survey of its present contents, we may as well perform what will be expected of us, by stating, as shortly as possible, the actual dimensions of the present structure, referring at the same time to that of the Hyde-park palace. The entire length of the new pile is 1608 feet, that of the former being 1848 feet; the entire length of the central transept is 384 feet, against 456 feet, the greatest depth in the first building; the height from the floor to the roof of the nave is 110 feet, against 66 feet, the height of the former nave; and the height

from the floor to the centre of the middle transept is 180 feet, against 108 feet, the height of the first transept. Owing to the fact that the ground upon which the new palace is built shelves considerably towards the park, the elevation on that side is 194 feet, an increase in height which tells well upon the general appearance. The actual space inclosed by the new building is 542,592 feet, or about 13½ acres, against 767,150 feet, or about 19 acres, in the old one. Thus it will be seen that while the inclosed area is nearly one-third less in the new pile than in the old, the height is about two-thirds greater—and it will be readily imagined that proportions so entirely different give a new character to the present undertaking. Add to this, that what was formerly the side is now the front of the edifice—that the device of breaking the long flatness of the façade by deep recesses at the ends of the transepts has been resorted to, and the immensely improved effect is readily conceivable, even without the aid of pictorial representation. But without such aid, or a personal visit, it is not easy to conceive what a really picturesque object the new palace becomes when seen from one of the many favourable points of view which the park presents. Our engraving perpetuates but one aspect of the picture, which the spectator may contemplate with renewed pleasure from a hundred different spots.

On entering the building from the terrace, we find ourselves in an underground chamber to which has been given the name of Paxton's tunnel. We mentioned above that the ground slopes downwards from the rear to the front of the building; the descent from one side to the other is as much as twenty-five feet, and of this circumstance the architect has availed himself in constructing a long tunnel or basement story, extending the whole length of the edifice. A portion of this long chamber will be allotted for the exhibition of working machinery, and another portion is fitted up with boilers for the heating of the water designed to raise the temperature of the interior in cold weather. To effect this, above fifty miles of iron piping, seven inches in diameter, are laid down beneath the floors, and connected with ventilators traversing the galleries, making together a huge arterial system dispensing warmth to every part. The pipes are so arranged that the water, after circulating through them, and parting with its caloric, returns to the boilers to be again heated. The furnaces will consume their own smoke, and thus there will be no visible effluvia projected through the central shafts of the water-towers at either end of the building. Experiments which were made with the warming apparatus during the late prevalence of snowy weather satisfactorily proved its efficiency.

On ascending to the level floor-line, and proceeding to the end of the nave towards the Dulwich Road, we are enabled to compare the effect of the interior view with our recollections of the same effect in the former structure. Indisputably, one striking charm is nearly lost altogether. We allude to that dim, mysterious, hazy, and eminently picturesque effect which arose from the much greater length of the Hyde-park palace, which delighted, because it deluded the eye of the spectator with the idea of unfathomable depth and

distance. Here there is no mystery to deal with; the eye commands the entire perspective, and, as it were, takes possession of the whole with a glance. In all other respects, however, the interior aspect of the Sydenham Palace is infinitely superior to that of its predecessor. The perspective of the long, lofty, arching nave excels the low, flat roof of the exhibition as much as the vaulted arch of a Roman temple does the ceiling of a barrack. The addition of forty-four feet to the height gives an air of sublimity and grandeur to the new building wanting to the old. Again, the monotonous repetition of columns and girders, complained of as wearisome to the eye in the first building, is avoided in the new one by the projection, at regular intervals, of pairs of columns, which, advancing forwards into the nave, break the perspective lines on either side, and impart a degree of variety to the view. On ascending to the galleries, where we observe that space is already allotted for the reception of different classes of manufactured goods, and viewing the area below from various points, the old idea of vastness grows upon us again, and we can easily conceive that by a judicious arrangement of the botanical and artistic specimens, that picturesque element of indefinite extent may be fully restored when the work is complete.

We must now turn our attention to the works of art which have here long been in process of execution, and which there is little doubt will form the principal features of attraction to this realm of fairy land. We enter first, as it happens to be nearest at hand, what is called the Pompeian Court, which is nothing more or less than a fac-simile of a Roman mansion restored to its beauty and brilliancy as it existed in Pompeii nearly eighteen hundred years ago. The building, as it stands here, complete in all its ornate elegance and luxury—wanting only the fountains—presents a spectacle which can nowhere else be witnessed. In design it combines the most enchanting simplicity with the most elaborate art, and, though never overloaded with ornament, is yet an example of all that ornamentation can accomplish in the production of chaste architectural effect. The apartments, which are small, are adorned with exquisite paintings, mostly of marine and mythological subjects—cupids, dolphins, satyrs, bacchantes, sea-bulls, tritons and venuses. They open into the compluvium or open court, in the centre of which is to be the fountain. Here all around tells of the Roman age and Roman customs, and one almost expects to see the Roman himself step forth in the *toga virilis*, and take the place of that policeman A 2001, as guardian of the *dulce domum*. In looking round upon the delicate gorgeousness of the painted columns and ceilings, it is curious to note how colours which, less artistically combined, would have produced a tawdry and repulsive effect, are so learnedly employed as to harmonise thoroughly, and to suggest, as they should do, the ideas of tranquillity and repose. This has been the work principally of foreign artists—the ornamentation having been intrusted to Signior Abbati, whom her majesty, who on her recent visit to the palace partook of refreshment in the compluvium, was pleased personally to compliment upon the "complete success" of his labours.

As we look round upon the graceful charms of

the restored mansion, the mind naturally reverts to the doom of the devoted city of which it may be regarded as a memento, and the horrors of that night when, amid the roar and thunder of Vesuvius, a flood of fire and lava rushed down upon its domes and temples, and blotted them for ever from the dwellings of mankind. Imagination sees the Roman maiden rushing distracted from her couch—the mother grasping her infants and madly fighting her way through the retreating crowds—the senator, heedless of his dignity, nor waiting the escort of his slaves, hurrying on the indiscriminate flight—the soldier perishing at his post—the miser lingering with his money-bags—and the devoted son by the side of his dying sire—while the black pall of sulphurous flame and smoke rolls darkling and flashing onwards, till the late populous city is buried with all its material beauty and glory in a single grave.

[TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.]

A NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERMAN

SOME twelve years ago, a desolate, dread, and ominously-named locality in Newfoundland had, among its other occupants, George Harvey, a worthy of sixty years' standing, born and bred on the spot, who may still be one of its living tenants, as he was then a hale and hearty man. The particular site to which we refer is towards the south-west extremity, between the settlement of La Poile and Cape Ray, where there is a cluster of small, low, rocky islets, separated from the mainland by a narrow channel. They are called the Dead Islands, *Iles aux Morts* of the French maps, but are portions of the dominions of queen Victoria. The isles and the main shore are composed of mica-slate and gneiss, the latter being intersected with enormous granite veins. Their superficial aspect is the most rugged and broken imaginable, grooved in every direction by small valleys or ravines, and covered with round hummocky knobs and hills with precipitous sides. Mosses, low bushes, and berry-bearing plants partially cover the surface; and a few dwarf firs appear huddled together in sheltered nooks, where sufficient soil has been lodged to form a support for the roots. But the majority of the isles are bare rocks, frequently in the shape of a low dome, with a tuft of bushes growing at the summit. Sometimes, when the breeze is blowing from the east, the fog which pours over the great bank is driven to this neighbourhood, and adds to its uninviting aspect. The few inhabitants, along with those thinly distributed on the adjoining main, are chiefly the descendants of British settlers, occupied with the in-shore fishery. They are located in the coves, in the general proportion of two or three families to each. Formerly, when there were no clergy or magistrates except at St. John's, they married by signing papers before witnesses, binding each party to have the ceremony performed as soon as opportunity offered—a mode of proceeding equivalent to the Scotch law. They are simple, honest, industrious, and hospitable—the virtues of almost all hardy races exposed to the toils and dangers of an adventurous life—intensely eager after news, and placing a high value upon trifling

articles of intelligence, like most people in secluded positions.

The melancholy name of the Dead Islands is supposed to be derived from the number and fatality of shipwrecks in the neighbourhood. George Harvey was accustomed to relate, among other incidents of his life, that he had been employed for five days along with some others in digging graves and interring dead bodies cast ashore on one of these sad occasions. Two vast and differently tempered sea-streams blend their waters on the great bank and its vicinity—a polar current from the cold regions of the arctic zone, and the gulf-stream from the warm latitudes of the tropics. It is to the meeting of these currents, charged with such different temperatures, that the fogs are chiefly due, while the numerous and powerful eddies caused by their junction render the navigation perplexing and somewhat perilous. The danger is increased by the boundaries of the currents being indefinite. They advance farther north and south at one time than another; and of course the minor streams dependent upon them vary in power and extent according to circumstances. Hence, along a coast unguarded by lighthouses, in dense fogs, or when a driving gale has been blowing by night, the mariner has often found himself ashore, while thinking of ample sea-room. Evidence of such casualties being frequent was in former days to be found in connection with almost every dwelling, in the shape of old rigging, spars, masts, sails, ship's bells, rudders, wheels, and other articles on the outside of the houses, with telescopes, compasses, and portions of incongruous furniture in the interior. At that period, there was obviously no nice observance of the distinction between thine and mine. Infractions of the rights of property were common on the occurrence of disasters by sea and fires on land, the parties loosely reasoning that the goods they appropriated to themselves were much better disposed of than by being left for the flames to consume or the billows to devour. In some cases, this reasoning was legitimate, as when a vessel deserted by the crew came ashore, and neither her name, nor that of the owners could be ascertained. Public sentiment and feeling have improved upon this point in Newfoundland, as elsewhere, and few persons have more nobly distinguished themselves in helping the stranger in distress, and mitigating the calamities of shipwreck, than George Harvey.

He had a large family of sons and daughters, mostly grown up. On one occasion, during a heavy gale, the brig "Despatch," full of emigrants of the poorer class, struck on a rock about three miles from his house. Though the sea was running high, the old man put off in his punt to the rescue, accompanied by a gallant girl of seventeen and a brave lad of twelve. By dint of great exertions, they succeeded in successively bringing away the whole of the crew and passengers, amounting to one hundred and sixty-three persons. This was as heroic an action as that which excited such general admiration in our own country, when Grace Darling ventured on the stormy deep, with her father, off the coast of Northumberland. Harvey hospitably entertained the shipwrecked emigrants according to his means, and shared his provisions with them, till tidings could be sent to La Poile,

and a vessel arrived to carry them away. They remained more than a fortnight, and so completely exhausted his stores, that the family had neither bread, flour, nor tea through the whole winter, but subsisted chiefly on salt fish. Sir T. Cochrane, then governor of the island, on hearing of his conduct, properly rewarded him with a hundred pounds, and an honorary medal. A few years afterwards, the ship "Rankin," of Glasgow, struck on a rock, and went to pieces, the crew hanging on to an iron bar or rail that went round the poop, when he fetched them off by six or eight at a time to the number of twenty-five, braving a heavy sea in his punt.

Harvey's knowledge of the animal kingdom was somewhat singular. He was intimately acquainted with the inhabitants of the waters, from the huge finned whale to the beautiful little capelin. He knew well enough the black bear, grey wolf, and splendid caribou; and was familiar with the osprey, ptarmigan, eider duck, and great northern diver. But frogs, toads, snakes, and other reptiles he had never seen, there being none in the island, though no legend is current there how St. Patrick "banished all the varmint." One of the commonest domesticated quadrupeds also in the empire was equally unknown, except by report, till on a visit to some settlement in Fortune Bay, he for the first time encountered a horse! His emotions at the sight were akin to those of the Mexicans on beholding the steeds of the Spanish invaders. The people wished, he said, to persuade him into mounting on its back, but "he knew better than that," though one fellow did ride it up and down several times. It was a feat too daring for the bold fisherman, who would sooner have mounted in his boat the stormiest billow that ever rolled. His description of the size and appearance of the wonderful creature highly interested his family on his return. Mr. Curzon has recently told the story of a Levantine monk who had never seen a woman—a relation strange, but true. Yet, had we not the fact on equally respectable authority—that of Mr. Jukes—it would seem incredible, that only a few years ago, there were subjects of queen Victoria, of British descent, speaking the English language, in the oldest of our colonies, to whom the horse was a strange animal.

We have said that Harvey was a fisherman; and fishing, or some process connected with it, is the occupation of almost every man, woman, and child in the country. Out of St. John's, either fish, or some sign of the finny tribe, visible or odoriferous, is met with wherever there is a population. At a distance from the capital, in the small settlements, the fishermen live in unpainted wooden cottages, scattered in the coves, now perched upon rocks or hidden in nooks, the neighbourhood showing small patches of cultivated garden ground, and copses of stunted wood. Each cabin has its fish-flake, a kind of rude platform, elevated on poles ten or twelve feet high, covered with a matting of sticks and boughs, on which the fish are laid out to dry. At a convenient point on the shore is a stage, much more strongly constructed, jutting out over the water. It forms a small pier, made in front to serve the purpose of a ladder, at which a landing frequently is alone possible on the steep and iron-bound coast. On returning

from the fishing-ground, the boat is brought to the stage with the cargo, and, striking a prong in the head of each fish, they are thrown upon it one by one, in much the same manner as hay is pitched into a cart. The operations of cutting open, taking out the entrails, preserving the liver for oil, removing the back-bone, and salting, are immediately performed upon the stage, in which the younger branches of the family are employed, males or females, as the case may be. The drying on the flakes is the last process. It is the in-shore fishery that is prosecuted by the British, not extending generally more than a mile or two from the harbours, that of the Great Bank being abandoned to the Yankees and French.

The seas swarm with almost every variety of fish in its season. There are incredible shoals of lance, a small, elongated, silvery, eel-like creature; vast armies of migratory herrings; and hosts of capelin, slight and elegantly-shaped, with a greenish back, silvery underneath the body, and some scales of a reddish tinge. These are the small fry. They serve as food for the omnivorous cod, and are followed by their rapacious enemy with gaping mouth and helter-skelter movement, through all the sinuosities of the coast. The cod, the great object of attraction to the fishermen, is just as actively pursued by his human foes. Early in May, the work of preparation commences, laying in provisions, arranging hooks, lines, nets, and the rigging of boats. Between the middle and close of the month, the spring herrings, or the first shoal, arrive, and are caught in nets, to be used for bait. About the middle of June, the capelin come in, crowding to the shores in countless myriads to spawn. They remain about a month, and, being the favourite food of the cod, the fishery is now at its height. In such numbers are they, that wherever there is a strip of beach, every rolling wave strews the sand with hundreds, which are swept off, perhaps, by the next billow, or fall an easy prey to the women and children, who stand ready with buckets and barrows to seize upon the precious and plentiful booty. On a fine moonlight night, the appearance of a secluded cove, or broader expanse, is often very remarkable, and even splendid. There are whales rising and plunging, throwing up spouts of water; cod-fish flitting their tails above the waves, reflecting the light of the moon from their silvery surface; and legions of capelin hurrying away to seek a refuge from the monsters of the deep. Towards the beginning of August, the capelin leave the shores, and are succeeded by the small cuttle-fish, which are followed in September by the autumnal, or "fall herrings," the last shoal, when the summer fishery closes. On some parts of the shores, where the water is shallow, seines and other kinds of nets are employed in the capture of the cod; or when the fish are so gorged that they refuse all baits, jigging is resorted to. A plummet of lead, armed with hooks, is let down, and moved rapidly to and fro, by which the fish are caught. But, notwithstanding every way, hooking, netting, and jigging, and the enormous annual destruction, the seas swarm with undiminished multitudes of cod-fish every recurring season. This is not surprising, when Leewenhoeck counted 9,384,000 in the spawn of a single individual of medium size, a number

that will defy all the efforts of man to exterminate.

The island has not only its fishermen, but fishing dogs; at least Harvey had one of this class, who had not been taught the craft, but took to it of his own accord, and followed it apparently for amusement. The animal was not of the breed distinguished in England as the Newfoundland dog, so celebrated for beauty, sagacity, and fidelity; but one of the short-haired, sharp-nosed Labrador race, the most abundant dogs in the country, not handsome, but intelligent and useful. When not wanted for the service of his master or the family, the dog would take his station on a projecting point of rock, and attentively watch the water, where it might be from six to eight feet deep, the bottom being white with fish bones. Upon a fish appearing, easily discovered over the whitened ground, it was immediately "set" by the dog, who waited for the favourable opportunity to make a plunge. This was upon the fish turning its broadside towards him, when down he went like a dart, and seldom returned without the struggling prey in his mouth. The animal regularly conveyed his capture to a particular spot selected by himself, and on a summer day would raise a fish-*stack* at the place, consisting of fifty or sixty individuals a foot long. To pass from fishermen, fish, and dogs to steamers is an abrupt transition. But it may be mentioned as of importance in Newfoundland history, that in 1497, the first ship, "Caboto," visited its waters; in 1536, the abundance of cod was discovered; and in 1840, the first steam-vessel reached the shore. This was H. M. S. "Spitfire," which entered the harbour of St. John's, to land a few troops from Halifax. Great was the astonishment and admiration of those who had never been out of the island. Some boatmen off the Narrows were so completely bewildered by the spectacle, that they were nearly run down by the huge novel craft.

THOUGHTS OF AN OLD SMOKER.

A QUARTER of a century ago, I began to master two difficult attainments: I learnt to shave, and I learnt to smoke. Of these two attainments, smoking was incomparably the hardest; but I managed it. What has it cost me? I have smoked almost all sorts of tobacco, and, as I suppose, in almost all forms. I began with cigarettes, advanced onwards to cigars, then to Maryland tobacco, then to returns, thence to birds-eye, and thence to the strongest shag. I have bought and smoked cigars at all prices, and of all manufactures, from the suspicious articles, seven of which may be bought for sixpence, and which probably are innocent of any connexion with nicotiana, save a slight tinge with its juice, to the havannah at thirty shillings a pound. I have been fanciful in cigar-tubes, and also in pipes, though to no alarming extent, having never paid more than seven shillings for a tube, and five shillings for a meerschaum; and, after all attempts to be fine, preferring the naked cigar, or the half yard of clay. I have spent money, too, on instantaneous lights of many sorts. When phosphorus-boxes, containing a small bottle of fiery mixture, and about a score of matches, cost

three shillings and sixpence each, I gave three and sixpence for one. When lucifer matches were invented, and sold for sixpence a box—less in quantity than may now be bought for a halfpenny—I patronized the manufacture. I have used German tinder, fuzees, and a dozen other kindred inventions; and all these, costing money, have served me only for the lighting of my pipes or cigars.

Looking at it, then, altogether, and taking into account cigars, cigar-cases, cigar-tubes, tobacco, pipes, and matches; considering, too, that I have been a constant and persevering, though not an enormous smoker, I may safely and fairly conclude—and keep within compass too—that, take one time with another, smoking has cost me—a shilling a week, for twenty-five years.

A shilling a week; that is to say, two pounds twelve shillings a year: making for the whole period, and without reckoning interest, either compound or simple, the sum of sixty-five pounds. Now this, I repeat, is keeping within compass; and a friend at my side tells me that two shillings a week would be nearer the mark. I fear it would; but as, during ten years past, I have not exceeded the more moderate computation, I shall let the shilling a week remain.

Sixty-five pounds—setting aside the consideration of interest—is a large sum. If, twenty-five years ago, instead of a tobacco-box I had set up a money-box, and dropped into it a weekly shilling, I cannot avoid the conclusion that I should be now sixty-five pounds richer than I am; and there are many things I could do with sixty-five pounds. It might serve me for half a year's housekeeping, for my establishment is on a humble scale; or it might turn to account as an apprenticeship premium for my eldest boy; or it might re-furnish my house. Or, if the shilling a week had been devoted to a life assurance, and I were to die to-morrow, my family would be the better for my self-denial, by a hundred and fifty pounds. Or if I had spent a shilling a week on literature, my library would now be, and much to my advantage, larger than it is. Or if, laying aside selfish considerations, I had set apart the shilling a week to works of charity and mercy, the world might have been the better for it. Many a heart-ache might have been relieved by the sixty-five pounds which I have puffed away. I think, then, that if I had to begin life again, I would not learn to smoke.

I know it may be said that the same arguments could be raised against this, that, and the other superfluity, which might be done without. But I am not writing about this, that, and the other superfluity; I am writing about tobacco-smoke.

To turn to another thought: I am not quite sure that smoking is a healthy practice. I know it is not necessary to health, for I see my friends who do not smoke are not troubled with diseases from which those of us who do, are exempt. My wife does not smoke, and, so far as I can see, she does not suffer from the privation. I might go a step further, and say, I have a strong suspicion that sometimes smoking disagrees with some of us, and is rather detrimental to health than otherwise. Certainly, excessive smoking is injurious; but who shall draw the line of demarcation between moderation and excess? As for

myself, I do not know that smoking has ever hurt me. It is true, when I have a bilious head-ache, I nauseate the smell of tobacco-smoke, but so do I nauseate also the smell of roast-beef. Still, as I firmly believe that I am none the better for smoking, I think, if young again, I would not learn to smoke.

Then again, I cannot help the conviction that smoking is rather the reverse of a sweet and cleanly practice. To be sure, my friends praise me for not betraying my habit; nevertheless, there are times when I am glad to rinse my mouth, and purify my garments, and fear that, after all, I carry about with me unmistakable tokens of what I have been doing. And I am quite sure that some of my smoking friends, who are less particular than I am, and especially those who cultivate dirty German pipes, are never free from the peculiar perfumery of stale tobacco. And as this is far from being pleasant to me, who am a smoker, I am sure it cannot be pleasant to those who are not smokers. Moreover, the expectoration which smoking provokes, is far from a pleasant or cleanly habit. On these accounts, then, had I to pass through life again, I think I would determine to pass through it without learning to smoke.

Again, I think that smoking does not add to a man's respectability. I am not sure that it has not, sometimes, a contrary tendency. This may depend on circumstances. Certainly, some men of the highest respectability do not think it any derogation to be seen at times inhaling the vapour of a cigar or a pipe; but no one will say that they would not be equally respectable were they known to avoid smoking as an evil thing. Whereas, on the other hand, some have notoriously lost caste by being numbered among the smokers: and, in fact, I am reluctantly compelled to admit, if a smoker be reckoned a respectable man, it is in spite of his habit, and not because of it.

Once more, it is not to be denied that a good many people in the world are so fastidious and weak, some smokers say, as to think smoking a disagreeable habit. They do not willingly admit a smoker into their houses, because they dislike his accompaniments. Well, say that it is fastidiousness and affectation, and "all nonsense"—though, friend and fellow-smoker, we have no right to say that—but suppose it be, the effect is the same; our practice makes us disagreeable, causes us to be shunned, and sometimes, if we don't take care, to be shut out from good society.

True, so far as I am concerned, I avoid this evil—the chance of being disagreeable, or of being thrust out from good society—by never smoking except where smoke is welcome. But it is not pleasant, at times, to be debarred a favourite resource for passing time. There is a little bit of self-denial required, I think, when a man would, but dare not, put a pipe to his mouth. And as, more or less often, such sacrifices must be made by the smoker who has consideration for others as well as for himself, or who has indeed due consideration for himself, I would, I think, if my youth could be renewed, avoid the need for this self-denial by not learning to smoke.

I think, moreover, that smoking is not one of the things which help to push a man onward in the world; and I am mistaken if, sometimes, the

habit is not like a clog to keep him back. I am very sure that a young man, for instance, is not more likely to obtain a situation of responsibility and trust, because he knows how to handle a cigar in an elegant manner, or is refined in his appreciation of the best oonoko: I have a strong impression, on the contrary, that such an one would prefer keeping this acquirement in the back-ground. In other words, I cannot but be persuaded that—all things else being equal—the man who does not smoke has a better chance of success in the world than the man who does: and as, if I were young again, I should wish to succeed, if possible, I think I would not learn to smoke.

And I do not wonder that men of business, and employers generally, look with suspicion upon tobacco-smokers; for though a youth or a man, in spite of this practice, may be a valuable servant, it is not to be denied that the smoker at times lays himself open to temptations, strongly tugging at him, to draw him aside from integrity and honour. It is not every smoker that can puff away at a *dry pipe*; and the youth who, to be manly, puts himself to the discomfort of learning to smoke, is likely also, with the same object in view, to learn to tipple. In short, I fear it would be found, if curiously and strictly sought into, that smoking often leads to sottishness. I fear also that, as with every other needless expense, it leads sometimes to dishonesty. It is not always that a youth or a man can afford to dissipate a shilling a week, nor sixpence either, in smoke. But five shillings a week would not suffice for the vespertine or nocturnal cigar and glass of many a "fast" youth of the present day. Where do they get their shillings?

Well, I never spent more than I thought I could honestly afford on smoke (perhaps they do not, either), and I never needed to wet my pipe; but because of the temptations which beset the smoker, I think, could I go back again to the morning of life, I would not learn to smoke.

Again, I do not think that smoking is generally necessary as an aid to mental exertion, or an incentive to profound study. I cannot subscribe to the motto, "*Ex fumo dare lucem*;" that is to say, so far as tobacco smoke is concerned. There have been philosophers, poets, statesmen, and divines, among the smokers; so have there been among the non-smokers. And I am compelled to conclude that wisdom does not coyly clothe itself in vapour. On the contrary, I am bound to acknowledge my reluctant belief that if the tobacco-pipe is sometimes a help-meet to the pen, it quite as often happens that the pen is the bond-servant of the pipe. Therefore, were I to begin the world again, I think I would not learn to smoke.

I think, lastly, that it is very disgusting to see beardless youths, and boys just entering their teens, puffing and spitting in the public streets. It was but an evening or two ago that I met a little mannikin, about four feet in height, and probably twelve years of age, with a face as smooth as a girl's, sucking furiously at a dirty meerschau nearly as long as his arm, till the ashes in the bowl glowed with a burning heat. And the most charitable wish I could frame for the poor misguided lad was, that before he got to the bottom of his pipe, he might be desperately sick.

Seriously, I have observed so many mischiefs connected with smoking—have known so many shipwrecks made by it, ay, even of faith and a good conscience—have seen so much time wasted, so much money too, and so much health—and have witnessed so much deterioration of character in some who have given themselves up to the practice, to be led captive by it at its will—that though I may have escaped, by God's help, its worst evils, yet if I had to begin life again, I would not—I think I would not—learn to smoke.

THE WISDOM OF CROWS.

In an American journal we meet with the following curious illustrations of the sagacity of these intelligent birds.

The miller of Cape Elizabeth one day, the winter before last, saw two crows light upon the millpond. One got firm footing upon a cake of ice; but the other, less judicious in the selection of his landing-place, pitched into some pulpy snow, from which he found it impossible to extricate himself. Crow No. 1 immediately came to the rescue, and tried to push him out of the scrape. Finding, however, that this was impossible, he stopped, cocked his head on one side in apparently knowing deliberation, then chatted for a moment with his unfortunate comrade, and flew off. The miller thought he would watch the *dénouement*. In about ten minutes crow No. 1 returned with two others. These three put heads together in consultation, flew round their imprisoned brother and examined his condition, and then by a joint effort raised him up and stood him upon the ice. This being accomplished, they rubbed against him to warm him, brushed the frozen snow from his wings, and finally all departed together, the saved crow being in the centre of the others, as though it was still necessary to watch after his welfare.

A few months since we were riding in a stage-coach with several gentlemen, when the conversation turned on the subject of crows, and many interesting anecdotes were related. One gentleman said he knew crows could count—at least as far as three—for he had often proved it. Being troubled with crows in his field, he had often tried to shoot them. But they knew what a gun was as well as he did, and therefore kept out of his reach. He then concluded to put up a small booth in the field, and place some carrion—a dead horse—within gun-shot. From this place he supposed he could fire at them when they alighted to eat. Whenever he entered the booth, the crows would all sit on the distant trees, and not one would come near till he was gone. Then all would alight, except the sentinel who remained to give warning if danger approached. The gentleman, finding this plan to fail, thought he would deceive them. So he took his son with him to the booth, concluding that when they had seen one go away, the crows would think the coast was clear, and descend to the bait. But when the son left the booth, a crow sung out *caw, caw, caw*—there goes one—but not a crow would leave his place. The next day the gentleman took two persons with him to the booth, and then let them depart one at a time. The crows on the trees saw the first and cried out, "There goes one," in their own peculiar

dialect. Then when the other went they cried, "There goes two;" but would not alight, for they counted three when they entered. The day following, the gentleman took three others with him. When they went out one by one, the crows cried, "There goes one"—"there goes two"—"there goes three." And when these men were out of sight they all alighted, and the gun of the fourth man did its work. The gentleman stated that this thing had been tried repeatedly, and it was evident that crows could count as far as three, but there their arithmetic ended. When they will ascend to the higher branches of mathematics is yet to be ascertained.

Further exemplifications of the same remarkable qualities were recently related at a meeting of the British Association, after the reading of a paper by Rev. F. Stratham on Instinct in Birds. Dr. Horner, on this occasion, stated that rooks built in the infirmary trees at Hull, but never over the street. One year, a young couple ventured to build over the street, and for eight mornings in succession the older rooks proceeded to destroy the nest, when at last the young ones chose a more fitting place. Mr. A. Strickland, after referring to the tendency of birds to build their nests of materials of a colour resembling that around their nests, related an instance in which the fly-catcher had built in a red-brick wall, and used for the nest mahogany shavings. He also referred to the meetings of rooks for judicial purposes. He had once seen a rook tried in this way, and ultimately killed by the rest.

BLESSEDNESS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.

HAPPY and blessed is the true Christian! He can look *upward*, and exclaim, "I shall not want, for the Lord Jehovah is my Shepherd! He who sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high, invites me to repose with confidence in his care; and promises to provide whatsoever may be necessary for my body and my soul, for my support in time, and my happiness in eternity!"

Happy and blessed is the true Christian! He can look *onward* for ever, and exclaim, "I SHALL NOT WANT!" He soars in thought above the horizon of men. With eagle eye he looks down the vista of time, to gaze upon the glories which surround the threshold of eternity. He beholds by faith the advent of his Lord—the splendour of the attendant seraphs—the resurrection of the sleeping, and the transfiguration of the living saints—their spiritual, glorified, and immortal bodies—the city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem—the innumerable company of angels—and the effulgent presence of Him at whose right hand is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. He contemplates with delight the removal of all sin—the subjugation of every enemy—the delivering up of the kingdom to the Father—and God all in all! Thus, onward and onward, can the Christian gaze, and exclaim with wonder, and gratitude, and adoration, "I SHALL NEVER WANT! The Lord Jesus shall be my Shepherd—the ransomed flock shall be my companions—heaven shall be my fold—and God himself shall be my portion, for ever and for evermore!"—*Stevenson*.

Varieties.

UMBRELLA COAT.—They have now in Paris an "Umbrella Great-Coat," which is intended to serve as a great-coat and an umbrella at the same time. It is made of impervious material, and has, running along the lower edge, an air-proof tube. Under the collar is a little blow-hole communicating with this tube. The wearer applies his mouth to this hole, and with a few exhalations he inflates it with air. The tube takes the consistency of a hoop, the great-coat takes the form of a diving-bell, and the drops fall a long way outside the wearer's feet. Such is Prevel's "Umbrella Great-Coat."

ABYSSINIAN RECEIPT FOR PICNIC BREAD.—First, you must of course have flour, of which you take a sufficient quantity: this you mix with water to make a stiff dough, which you knead up well with your hands into balls, each the size and form of a nine-pound shot. Then take a round pebble, heated previously in the fire, and making a hole in your loaf, poke it in and close the mouth: then, putting the loaf on the embers, you must be careful to turn it about, so that it may not be done more on one side than the other. In about ten minutes it will be baked and ready for eating; so that you will, if hungry and clever, have made, baked, and eaten your bread in not much more than a quarter of an hour, which all will allow to be sufficiently quick. The only fault to find with bread thus made is, that seldom more than the outside and inside surfaces are at all baked.

MODE OF LION CAPTURE IN MESOPOTAMIA.—The marshes and the jungles near the rivers are the retreats of many kinds of wild animals. Lions abound; and Mr. Layard met with their traces frequently during his excavations at Niffer. The Arabs boast of catching them in the following manner; and Mr. Layard was informed by trustworthy persons, that they had seen the feat performed. A man, having bound his arm with strips of tamarisk, and holding in his hand a strong piece of the same wood, about a foot or more in length, hardened in the fire and sharpened at both ends, will advance boldly into the animal's lair. When the lion springs upon him, he forces the wood into the animal's extended jaws, which will then be held open whilst he can dispatch the astonished beast at his leisure with the pistol that he holds in his left hand.

SINGULAR MIRAGE AT CTESIPHON.—As Mr. Layard was riding towards Bagdad, he witnessed a remarkable instance of this singular phenomenon, which he thus describes. "As the quivering sun rose in unclouded splendour, the palace was transformed into a vast arcade of enormous arches resting upon columns and masses of masonry. Gradually, this arcade was, as it were, compressed like the slides of a telescope, but the building gained in height what it lost in length, and one arch slowly appeared above the other, until the ruin assumed the appearance of a tower reaching to the sky, and pierced from the base to the summit by innumerable arches. In a few minutes this strange edifice began to melt away into air, and I saw a magnified, though perfect image of the palace; but upon it was its exact counterpart upside down. Other equally singular changes succeeded until the sun was high in the heavens, and the ruin at length disappeared in the distance. The small bushes of camel-thorn scattered over the desert, were, during this time, turned into forest trees, and a transparent lake imaged for a fleeting hour in its counterfeit waters, the varying forms of the unsubstantial edifice. Although I have seen many extraordinary effects of mirage during my wanderings in the east, I scarcely remember to have witnessed one more striking or more beautiful than that near the ruins of Ctesiphon."

ODD DIRECTIONS ON LETTERS.—We learn from the "Durham Advertiser," that the following curious direction was found on a letter lately consigned to the post-office:—"John Todd. Has a wooden leg, and lives somewhere about Bitchburn, nigh Crook. Find him out, postman." It is added that the postman did find him out, wooden leg included. In another post-office, a letter was posted for "John Smith" with "a wooden head." The postman did not find him out. The number implicated was great, and not one would accept the description, so that the letter was absorbed by the "dead" department.

ANCIENT PYRAMID IN CALIFORNIA.—Another of those numerous evidences of a civilized antiquity in the "New World" has just turned up, it seems, in shape of a great stone pyramid, composed of courses from 18 inches to nearly 3 feet in thickness, and 5 to 8 eight feet in length. It has a level top of more than 50 feet square, though it is said to be evident from the remains that it was once completed. This pyramid differs, in some respects, from the Egyptian pyramids, being more slender or pointed; and the outer surface of the blocks being cut to an angle, that gave the structure, when new and complete, a smooth or regular surface from top to bottom. From the present level of the sands, there are fifty-two distinct layers of stone, that will average at least 2 feet: this gives its present height 104 feet; so that before the top was displaced it must have been at least 20 feet higher than at present. How far it extends beneath the surface of the sands it is impossible to determine without great labour.

FRANKLIN AND VOLTAIRE.—The enthusiasm of which Franklin had been the object at Versailles was renewed at Paris. Voltaire had recently arrived there, after an absence of thirty years. He was in his eighty-fifth year. Franklin called upon him, and was received with evident pleasure. Voltaire at first accosted him in English; but, having lost the habit of speaking it, he resumed the conversation in French, adroitly remarking, "I could not resist the temptation of speaking for a moment the language of Franklin." The Philadelphia sage then presented his grandson to the patriarch of Ferney, and asked his blessing (!). "God and Liberty," said Voltaire, raising his hands over the young man's head, "that is the only benediction appropriate to the grandson of Franklin." A few days after this interview the same parties met at the Academy of Sciences, and were placed side by side. The sight of these distinguished old men elicited another outbreak of Parisian enthusiasm. The cry arose that they should embrace. They stood up, bowed, took each other by the hand, and spoke. But this was not enough. The clamour continued. "*Il faut s'embrasser à la Française*," was the cry; whereupon they kissed each other on the cheek, and not till then did the tumult subside. The scene was classically compared by the *littérateurs* of the day to "Solon embracing Sophocles." Voltaire lived only a month after this second encounter with his American contemporary.—*New York Literary World*.

SINGULAR DISCOVERY.—In the extensive excavations for coprolites at Sutton, near Woodbridge, beds of organic remains of vegetables, fruits, &c., have been discovered.

ENGRAVINGS IN RELIEF.—The Paris papers say that a deaf and dumb man has invented a glass by which engravings are represented in relief with astonishing fidelity.

WEAVING BY ELECTRICITY.—A patent has been taken out by a French gentleman for the application of electricity in the process of weaving silk and other fabrics, which may prove a great saving where the pattern is of an elaborate character. The treadle of the weaver lifts the thread and connects the extremity of each, by means of copper wire, with a current of electricity, either positive or negative at will, and the result is, that some of the threads remain suspended, and others descend, according as the current is directed. To direct the electricity, a series of points are arranged in a line like the teeth of a comb, each point communicating with an electro-magnet. The weaver will pass underneath these points the design, traced in varnish on a cylinder or on a metallic leaf in communication with the battery. The current will pass only where the varnish is wanting, and the corresponding threads will remain suspended, by that means reproducing the design.

EFFECTS OF CONTENTMENT.—If men knew what felicity dwells in the cottage of a godly man, how sound he sleeps, how quiet his rest, how composed his mind, how free from care, how easy his position, how moist his mouth, how joyful his heart, they would never admire the noises, the diseases, the throngs of passions, and the violence of unnatural appetites, that fill the house of the luxurious and the heart of the ambitious.—*Bishop Taylor*.